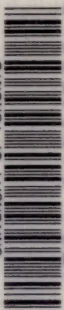


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The Tudor Facsimile Texts

A

Knack to Know a Knave.

*Date of the first known edition, . . . . . 1594.*

*(Dyce Collection at S. Kensington.)*

*Reproduced in Facsimile, 1911.*





The Tudor Facsimile Texts

[Vol. 62]

*Under the Supervision and Editorship of*

JOHN S. FARMER

A

Knack to Know a Knave.

1594

*Issued for Subscribers by the Editor of*

THE TUDOR FACSIMILE TEXTS  
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A

## Knack to Know a Knave.

1594.

*This play is reproduced from an original now in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington. The British Museum example is a much poorer copy. Indeed, play for play, the Dyce books are usually far and away superior in every way as compared with B.M. copies. For this reason, though the cost of reproduction is considerably enhanced thereby, and also in spite of the fact that there is no proper studio at South Kensington, as at the Museum, Mr. Fleming at my request rightly chooses the Dyce Bequest copies. There is another example in the Bodleian at Oxford.*

*The "Knack to Know a Knave" was probably written in 1592.*

*Comparing this facsimile with the original, there is nothing that calls for special remark; the reproduction is generally and uniformly good.*

JOHN S. FARMER.





A most pleasant and  
merie new Comedie,

Intituled,

*A Knacke to knowe a Knaue.*

Newlie set foorth, as it hath fundrie  
tymes bene played by ED. ALLEN  
and his Companie.

*With KEMPS applauded Merrimentes  
of the men of Goteham, in receiuing  
the King into Goteham.*



Imprinted at London by Richard Iones, dwelling  
at the signe of the Rose and Crowne, nere  
Holborne bridge. 1594.

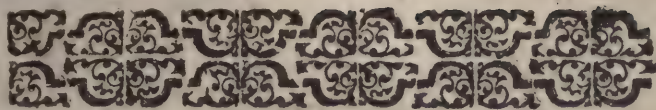












## A merie Knacke to

knowe a Knaue,

Enter King Edgar, bishop Dunston, and Perin a courtier.

King, **D**Vnston, how highlie are we bound to praise  
The Eternall God that still prouides for vs,  
And giuez vs leaue to rule in this our land,  
Lyke wise Vaspasian, Romes rich Emperour:

Suppressing sinne, that daylie raignes in vs :  
First, murther we rewarde with present death,  
And those that doe commit fellonious crimes,  
Our lawes of England doe awarde them death:  
And hee that doeth dispoyle a Virgins chastitie,  
Must likewise suffer death by lawes decree,  
And that decree is irreuocable.  
Then as I am Gods Vicegerent heer on earth,  
By Gods appointment heere to raigne and rule,  
So must I seeke to cut abuses downe,  
That lyke to Hydras heades, daylie growes by one in ano-  
And therein makes the land infectious. (thers place,  
Which if with good regard we looke not to,  
We shall, lyke Sodom, feele that fierie doome,  
That God in Justice did inflict on them.

Dunston. Your Graces care herein I much cummend,  
And England hath iust cause to praise the Lorde,  
That sent so good a King to gouerne them,  
Your lye may be a Lanterne to the state,  
By perfect signe of humilitie.  
Howe blest had Sodome bene in sight of God,  
If they had had so kinde a Gouvernour,  
They had then vndoubtedlie escapt that doome,

A merie knacke

That God in iustice did inflict on them:  
Then England kneele vpon thy hartie knee,  
And praise that God, that so prouides for thee.  
And vertuous Prince, thou Salomon of our age,  
Whose peares I hope shall double Nestors raigne,  
And bring a thousand profites to the land:  
My selfe (O dead Prince) in token of my loue,  
And dutifull obedience to your Grace,  
Will studie daylie, as my dutie willes,  
To roote sinnes from the flourishing common wealth,  
That Fame in euery angle of the world,  
May sound due praise of Englands vertuous King.

King. Dunston, liue thou, and counsell still the king,  
To maintaine Justice, were it on himselfe,  
Rather than soothing him in his abuse,  
To see subuersion of his common wealth.  
I tell thee Dunston, thou hast pleased the King,  
And proued thy selfe a vertuous counsellour:  
Thy counsell is to me as North Stars light,  
That guides the Sayler to his wished port:  
For by that Starre he is so comforted,  
That he sailes daungerlesse on daungerous seas,  
And in his deepest sadnes comforts him:  
So Dunstons knowledge is that Starre of ioy,  
That will with helpe conduct me to my happinesse.

Honesty. And yet thou art not happy Edgar,  
Because that sinnes, lyke swarmes, remaine in thee.

King. Why, tis impossible, for I haue studied still,  
To root abuses from the common wealth.

That may infect the king or communalitie,  
Therefore, base Deafant, wilfull as thou art,  
I tell thee troth, thou hast displeasd the King.

Honesty. Nay, the King hath displeased himselfe,  
In trusting euery one that speaks him faire:  
For though faire words, Kings manie tymes are faine  
To countenance Ruanes by their authoritie:

I will



to knowe a Knaue,

I will not say your Grace doeth so.

Perin. No sir, you were not best.

Honesty. Why, if I should, I might make good my word,  
And fynd a Knaue, I feare, before I part.

King. Why, what art thou?

Honesty. Garry I goe plaine, and my name is Honesty,  
A friend to your Grace, but a foe to Flatterers,  
And one that hath a Knacke to know a Knaue. (giuen you,

Perin. As how sir, by art, or by some foolish gift God hath  
You are some Uisician, or skild in Uisognomy, or in palmestry  
For I am sure, you can neuer do it by Astronomie,  
Because there are no starres to knowe a knaue. (cost,

Hon. True, but many an honest man knowes a knaue to his  
And is neither Uisicia, Uisognomer, palmester, nor astronomer  
But a plaine man of the country, lyke me.

That knowes a knaue, if he doe but see his cap.

Per. That wer pretie I faich, to see Honesty know a knaue  
Tis more than I can do with al the skil I haue: (by his cap,  
But tel me I pray thee, how I should know a knaue.

Hon. I beleue you wel, for offenders neuer bewray their  
Till the Law fynd them, and punish them: (offences

But you would faine tell how to know a knaue,  
Then thus, the first man you meet in the morning,

If he salute you, or aue ncere him,

And smell to his hat, and after smell to your owne,

And my cap to a noble, if his smel lyke yours, he is a knaue,

I thinke I spoke with you now.

Perin. Base Villain, were it not that the Kinges presence  
doth priuilege thy presumpcion, I wold reach you to test with your

Ki. Forbear, honesty, thou art a good plain fellow, (fellows  
And I comend thy wit, that hast such waies to know a knaue.

Hon. Honesty is plaine my Lord, but no good fellow,  
For good fellows be purse-takers now a daies:

And there be so manie of such good fellows,

That Honesty may walke the stretes without company,

Not that there wants company, but honest company I mean,  
And yet Honesty, can clap a knaue on the shoulde for al his

hauerie,

### A merie knacke

Perin, Why (bale companton) meane you me?  
Honesty. Not bale (sir) because I was truelle begotten,  
For Honesty may be suspected, but neuer detected:  
But you think I had a bayliefe to my father as you had,  
And that my mother could returne a wyle of erroz,  
As yours did, when such a Gallant as you were gotten.

King. Beleene me, Perin, he hath toucht you now,  
And I perceiue, though Honesty be simple,  
Yet manie tymes he speaks trueth. (not lies)

Honesty. True, if it please your Grace, for honest men will  
But if your Grace vouchsafe to giue me leaue,  
You shall see me finde moze knaues than one.

If my cunning faile me not, or els say Honesty had no honesty

Ki. But tel me, Dunston, how thinkest thou of this motion?  
Were it not good thinkest thou we gaue him leaue  
To stifle such Caterpillers as corrupt the common welth:  
For manie tymes such simple men as he,  
Bewray much matter in simplicitie:

Then tell me Dunston, what thinkest thou of his motion?

Dunst. If it please your Grace to thinke it good,  
Dunston will say as once Hecestion did,  
When Alexander was rich Macedone,  
That what so ere the King himselte thought meete,  
He would in dutifull obedience yeeld vnto:  
And so saith Dunston to your Maestie,  
For many times such simple men bying that to passe,  
That wiser heads cannot attaine vnto,  
For doubtlesse he hath some deuice in hand,  
Whereby to fynde such subtile knauerie.

King. Well, Dunston, then as thou hast counseled me,  
I will for once make prooffe of Honesty: sirra, come hither,  
In hope you wil, as your profession is,  
In honest soyt to fynde deceiuers out:  
And spying them, to giue vs notice straight,  
That we may punish them for their amysse:  
We giue thee leaue to worke what means thou maist,









to knowe a Knaue,

So it be not prejudice to the state nor vs.

Honesty. My gracious Lord, if Honestie offend,  
In anie thing that he hath promised,  
And doe not as your Grace hath giuen in charge,  
Scisse such Caterpillers as corrupt the state.  
Let Honestie receiue such punishment,  
As he deserues that leases to the king.

(thee first,

King. Honestie it is ynough, but tel me now what moued  
To vnder take this taske to visit vs, speak truth, resemble not:

Honest. If I shuld tel your Grace twold make you laugh  
To heare how Honestie was entertainde,  
Dooze, lame and blinde when I came once ashore,  
Lord, how they came in flocks to visit me,  
The shepheard with his hooke, and Thresher with his flaille,  
The very pedler with his dog, and the tinker with his male.  
Then comes a souldier counterfeite, & with him was his Jug,  
And Wil the whipper of the dogs had got a bounsling trug:  
And coging Dick was in the crue, that swoze he cam frō Frāce  
He swoze that in the Kings defence, he lost his arm by chance,  
And yet in conscience, if I were put to sweare,  
I would be bound to lay a pound, the knaue was neuer there,  
And hapning mongst this companie by chance one day,  
I had no sooner namde my name, but they ran all away,  
But now I will to my taske, and leaue your Grace,  
And so I take my conge of your Maiestie.

King. Honestie, farewell, and looke vnto your charge.

Perin. My gracious Lord, if I might not offend,  
I would increat a fauour at your hand,  
Tis so, I heard of late, my gracious Lord,  
That my kinde father lay at popnt of death,  
And if (my Lord) I should not visite him,  
The world (I feare) would fynd great fault with me.

King. Nay, Perin, if your businesse bee of waight,  
We are content to giue you leaue to goe:  
Prouided this, that you returne againe,  
When you haue seene your Father and your friends.

## A merie knacke

Perin. My gracious Lord, I will not stay there long,  
 Only but see my father and returne againe.  
 Till when my gracions Lord, I take my leaue.  
 Kin, Perin farewell, and tel me Dunston, now we are alone,  
 What doest thou thinke of beauteous Alfrida,  
 For she is reported to be be passing faire:  
 They say she hath a white pit in hir chin,  
 That makes her looke lyke to the Queene of Ioue,  
 When she was dallying with Endymion:  
 Beleue me Dunston, if she be so faire,  
 She will serue our turne to make a Concubine,  
 He thinks tis good some tyme to haue a loue  
 To sport withall, and passe away the tyme.

Dun. I, my good Lord, Dunston could wel allow of it,  
 If so your Grace would marrie Alfrida.

King. What, wouldst thou haue me marie her I neuer saw  
 Then men would say I doted on a wench:  
 But Dunston, I haue found a policie,  
 Which must indeed be followed to the full:

Enter Echenwald.

Earle Echenwald, welcome, I thought to send for you,  
 You must goe doe a message for vs now,  
 Tis nothing but to woo a Wench, which you can doe:  
 You must not woo her for your selfe but me,  
 Tell her, I sit and pine lyke Tantalus:  
 And if you can, straine forth a teare for me,  
 Tell her, she shall be honoured in my Loue,  
 And beare a childe that one day may be King:  
 Bid her not stand on tearmes, but send me word,  
 Whether she be resolved to loue me, yea or no.  
 If she say no, tell her I can enforce her Loue:  
 Or tis no matter though you leaue that out,  
 And tell her this, we heare she is as wyse,  
 As eloquent and ful of Oratory, as Thaly was, daughter of  
 Whose speeches were so pleasing among the Greeks: (Iupiter  
 That she was tearmed a second Socrates.

For









to knowe a Knaue.

For some report, women loue to be praised,  
Then in my cause I pray thee loue thou Alfrida.

Ethen. My gracious Lord, and Ethenwald shall not faile  
To shew his humble dutie to your Maiestie:  
I will, my Lord, woe her in your behalfe,  
Plead loue for you, and straine a sigh to show your passions,  
I will say she is fairer than the Dolphins eye,  
At whome amazde, the night stars stand and gaze,  
Then will I praise her chin, and cheeke, and pretty hand,  
Long made lyke Venus, when she vsbe the harp,  
When Mars was reueling in loues high house.  
Besides, my Lord, I will say she hath a pace,  
Such like to Iuno in Idea vale,  
When Argus watcht the Heifer on the mount:  
These words, my Lord, will make her loue, I am sure,  
If these will not my Lord, I haue better far.

King. May, this is well, now Ethenwald be gone,  
For I shall long to heare of thy returne.

Eth. My gracious Lord, I humbly take my leaue. Exit.

King. Ethenwald farewell: Dunston, how likeliest thou this:  
What, haue I done well in sending Ethenwald:  
But in good tyme, how if he lyke the, maybe,  
Beleeue me Dunston, then my game is mard.

Dunst. I doe not thinke, my gracious Lord,  
My Nephew Ethenwald beares that bad mind,  
For hether to he hath bene tearmed iust,  
And kept your Grace his gracious fauourer.

Ki. True Dunston, yet haue I read that Loue  
Hath made the sonne beceiue the father oft:  
But Dunston, leauing this, come lets to court.

Dunston. I will attend vpon your Maiesty, Exeunt.

Enter Baylie of Hexam, and his foure sonnes, to wit, a  
Courtier, a Priest, a Conicatcher, and  
a Farmer.

Bayly. **M**y sonnes you see how age decaies my state,  
And that my lyfe lyke snow before the sun:

B

Giues

## A merie knacke

Oins to dissolue into that substance nowe,  
 From whose inclosure grew my syze of lyfe,  
 The earth I meane, sweet mother of vs all,  
 Whom death authorized by heauens high power,  
 Shall bring at last, from whence at first I came,  
 Yet ere I yeeld my selfe to death, my sonnes,  
 Giue eare, and heare what rules I set you downe,  
 And first to thee my sonne, that liuest by wit,  
 I know thou hast so many honest sleights,  
 To shift and cosen smoochly on thy wit,  
 To cog and lie, and haue it with the best,  
 That twere but labour lost to counsell thee,  
 And therefore to the next, Walter, that seemes in shew a husband-  
 My sonne, when that thy master trusts thee most, (mant  
 And thinks thou dealest as cruelie as himselfe,  
 Be thou the first to worke deceit to him:  
 So by that means thou maist enrich thy selfe,  
 And liue at pleasure when thy maister's dead:  
 And when to market thou art sent with woll,  
 Put sand amongst it, and cwill make it weigh,  
 The waight twise double that it did before,  
 The ouerplus is thine into thy purse.  
 But now my sonne, that keeps the Court,  
 Be thou a means to set the Peeres at strife,  
 And currisauour for the commoners loue.  
 If any but in conference name the King,  
 Informe his Maiestie they enuie him.  
 And if the king but moue or speake to thee,  
 Kneele on both knees, and say, God saue your Maiestie.  
 If any man be fauoured by the King,  
 Speake thou him faire, although in heart thou enuie him.  
 But who is next?

Priest. That am I father, that vse the word of God,  
 And liue only by the heauenly Panna.

Bayl. Who's the Priest, Giue eare my sonne,  
 I haue a lesson yet in store for thee:  
 Thou must (my son) make shew of holinesse,

And









to knowe a Knaue,

And blinde the worlde with thy hypocritie:  
 And sometime giue a pennie to the pooze,  
 But let it be in the Church or market place,  
 That men may praise thy liberalitie.  
 Speak against blurie, yet forsake no pawnes,  
 So thou maist gaine three shillings in the pounce:  
 Marke thou the worlde from sin and vile excesses,  
 And now and then speak against drunkenness,  
 So by this means thou shalt be tearmed wise,  
 And with thy purenes blind the peoples eyes.  
 But now (my sonnes) discourse to me in brieve,  
 How you haue liued, and how you meane to die.

Conicatcher. Then (father) thus liue I that vse my wit,  
 Unto my selfe I loue still to be wise,  
 For when I am driuen to shift for meat or coine,  
 Or gay apparell to maintaine me bzaue,  
 Then doe I flaunt it out about the change,  
 As if I were some landed Gentleman,  
 And falling in with some rich merchant there,  
 I take commodities for sixe months day,  
 The bill being made, I must set to my hand,  
 Then if I pay not, they may burne the band.

Farm. Then father, hark how I haue profited,  
 Walter your son that keeps the countrie,  
 I haue raised the markets, and oppressed the pooze,  
 And made a thousand goe from doze to doze:  
 And why did I (think you) vse this extremitie,  
 Because I would haue cozne ynough to feed the enemye,  
 Father, you know we haue but a while to liue,  
 Then while we liue, let each man shift for one:  
 For he that can not make shift in the worlde,  
 They say hees vnwoorthy to liue in it.  
 And he that liues must still increase his store,  
 And he that hath most wealeth of all desireth more.

Perin. Brethren you haue spoken wel, I must needs say,  
 But now giue eare to me, to me that keeps the court.

## A meric knacke

Father, I liue as Anstipus did, & vse my wits to flatter with  
 If any in priuate conference name the king, (the king,  
 I straight informe his Grace they enuie him:  
 Did Sinon liue with all his subtiltie:  
 We could not tell a flatterring tale moze cunninglie:  
 Some tyme I moue the King to be effeminate,  
 And spend his tyme with some coy Curtizan:  
 Thus with the King I currie fauour still,  
 Though with my heart I wish him any ill:  
 And sometime I can counterfeite his hand and seale,  
 And borrow money of the communalty:  
 And thus I liue and flaunt it with the best,  
 And vice and carde inferiour vnto none:  
 And none dares speake against me in the court,  
 Because they know the King both fauour me.

Priest. And I among my bryethen and my friends  
 Doe still instruct them with my doctrine,  
 And Dea and nay goes through the world with vs.  
 For not an oath we sweare for twentie pound,  
 Bryethen (say we) take heed by Adams fall,  
 For by his sinnes we are condemned all.  
 Thus preach we still vnto our bryethen,  
 Though in our heart we neuer meane the thing:  
 Thus doe we blind the world with holinesse,  
 And so by that are tearmed pure Precilians.

Bayl. Full well and wisely haue you said my sonnes,  
 And I commend you for your forward mindes:  
 That in your liues bewray whose sonnes ye are:  
 Here haue I bene a Bayliffe thre score yeaeres,  
 And vse exaction on the dwellers by,  
 For if a man were brought before my face,  
 For colenage, cheft, or liuing on his wit,  
 For counterfeiting any hand or seale,  
 The matter heard, the witness brought to me,  
 I tooke a byrte, and set the prisoners free:  
 So by such dealings I haue got the wealth

Calico



to knowe a Knaue.

Which I would haue disburst among you al,  
With this prouiso, that you all shall liue,  
And lead such liues as I haue set you downe,  
Carue to your selues, and care not what they say,  
That bid you feare the fearfull Iudgment day.  
Liue to your selues while you haue tyme to liue,  
Get what you can, but see ye nothing giue:  
But hearken my sonnes, me thinks I heare a noyse,  
And gastle visions makes me timerous,  
Ah see my sonnes, where death, pall Death appeares,  
To summon me befoze a fearfull Iudge:  
He thinks reuenge stands with an ypon whip,  
And cries repent, or I will punish thee:  
My heart is hardened, I cannot repent.  
Ah hark, me thinks the Iudge doth giue my doome,  
And I am damned to euer burning fyre:  
Soule, be thou safe, and bodie flie to hell. He dyeth,

Enter Deuil, and carie him away.

Conic. Brother, why do you not read to my father:

Priest. Trulie my booke of exhortation is at my place of  
Exercise, and without it I can doe nothing: Gods peace bee  
with him. Exeunt.

Enter the King, Philarchus, his father, Dunston,  
and Attendants.

King. **F**ather say on, for now my leisure serues,  
And Edgar giues thee leaue to tell thy minde,  
For I perceiue thine eyes are full of teares,  
Which shoves that manie inward passions troubles thee.  
If anie here haue wronged thine aged yeares,  
In keeping that from thee that is thy due,  
Name but the man, and as I am Englands King,  
Thou shalt haue all the fauour I can shew.

Father. Then vertuous Prince, my prour of curtesie,  
Whose Iudgements, and whose lawes for gouernment,  
And punishing of euerie soule abuse,  
Is like the iudgement of great Alexander,

A merie knacke

Thirde of that name, whom some tearmed the Seuerer,  
 Of lyke Vaspasian, Romes vertuous gouernour,  
 Who for a blowe his sonne did giue a Swaine,  
 Did straighe commaund that he should loose his hand.  
 Then vertuous Edgar, be Vaspasian once,  
 In giuing sentence on a gracelesse childe,  
 Know vertuous Prince that in my pride of yeares,  
 When lustfull pleasure pycke my wanton minde:  
 Euen in the Aprill of my flourishing ti me,  
 I was betroth'd, and wedded to a wyfe,  
 By whome, too soone, I had that unkind boy,  
 Whose disobedience to his aged Syre,  
 The Lord wil plague with tormentes worse than death,  
 This disobedient childe, nay base Abstrauogant,  
 Whome I with care did nourish to this state,  
 Wust with a pride, that vpsstart Courriers vse,  
 And seeing that I was brought to pouertie,  
 He did refuse to know me for his Syre.  
 And when I challenged him by Natures lawes,  
 To yeeld obedience to his Fathers age,  
 He told me straighe, he took it in great scozne,  
 To be begot by one so base as I.  
 My age that ill could brook his sharpe replie,  
 Did with this wand (my Lord) reach him a blowe  
 But he contrary lawes of God and men,  
 Did strike me such a blowe in vild disdaine,  
 That with the stroke I fel to earch againe.

King. Unkind Philarchus, how hast thou misdon  
 In wilful disobedience to thy Syre?  
 Art thou growne proud because I fauoured thee?  
 Why, I can quicklie make thee bare againe,  
 And then, I think, being in thy former state,  
 Thou wilt remember who thy father was:  
 And gentle Sophocles, in good tyme I recount,  
 Thy ancient saying, not so old as true,  
 For saith he that hath many children,

Shall







to knowe a Knaue.

Shall neuer be without some myrth,  
Nor die without some sorowe, for if they  
Be vertuous, he shall haue cause to reioyce,  
But if vicious, stubburne, or disobedient,  
Euer to liue in continuall sadnesse. (solent,  
I am sozie (Philarchus) that my fauours haue made thee in-  
wel, I wil see now if my frownes wil make thee penitent.  
Now Father, see how Nature gins to worke,  
And how salt teares, lyke drops of peely dew  
Falls from his eies, as sorowing his amisse.

Phil. Most gracious Prince, vouchsafe to heare me speake,  
I cannot but confesse (most gracious Soueraigne)  
That I haue erd in being obstinate in wilful disobedience to  
Wherin I haue wrongd nature and your Maiesty (my sye  
But I am not the first whom ouersight  
Hath made forgetfull of a Fathers loue:  
But Fathers loue shall neuer be forgot,  
If he but daue to pardon my amisse:  
But if your wrath will no waies be appeased,  
Rip vp this breast, where is inclosde that heart,  
That bleeds with griefe to thinke on my amisse.  
Ah Father pardon, Sweet Father pardon me.

Fath. No (gracelesse Impe, degenerate and unkinde)  
Thou art no sonne of mine, but Tygers whelp,  
That hast bene fostered by some Lyons pay,  
But as the tallest Ash is cut down, because it yeelds no fruit,  
And an vnproffitable cow, yeelding no milke, is slaughtred,  
And the idle Drone, gathering no honte, is contemned,  
So vngrateful chyldren, that will yeeld no naturall obedience,  
Must be cut off, as vnfit to beare the name Chyistians.  
Whose liues digresse both from reason and humanitie,  
But as thou hast dealt vnnaturallie with me,  
So I resolue to pull my heart from thee,  
Therefore dread Prince, vouchsafe to pitie me,  
An grant I may haue Iustice on my sonne.

### A meric knacke

King. Dunston, how counsailest thou the King in this?  
I promise thee I am sorie for the Youth,  
Because in heart I euer wisht him well.

Dunst. My gracious Lord, if I might counsell you,  
I would counsell you to iudge as he deserues,  
He that disdaines his Father in his want,  
And wilfullie will disobey his Syze,  
Deserues (my Lord) by Gods and Natures lawes,  
To be rewarded with extreamest illes:  
Then as your Grace hath stablished lawes for gouernment,  
So 'et Offenders feele the penalties,

King. I Dunston, now thou speakest as fits a counsellor,  
But not as friend to him whom Edgar loues:  
Father, what wouldest thou haue me doe in this?  
Thou seest thy sonne is sorie for his fault,  
And I am sure thou would not wish his death,  
Because a fathers care commands the contrarie,  
Then (gentle Father) let me plead for him,  
And be his pledge for shunning wilfull illes.

Fath. Will Edgar now be found a partiall Iudge,  
In pleading pardon for a gracelesse childe?  
Is it not true, that one cole of fyre will burne many houses?  
And one small brycke in finest cloath that is,  
Will both disgrace and blemish the whole peece:  
So wilfull children, spotted with one ill,  
Are apt to fall to twentie thousand moze,  
And therefore (mightie Soueraigne) leaue to speake,  
And passe iust sentence on Philarchus lyfe.

Philarch. My life (dear father) that sentence wer too hart,  
Let me be banisht from my countries bounds,  
And liue as exile in some wilbernes,  
Bard from societie and sight of men,  
Or let me hazard fortune on the seas,  
In setting me aboard some helmesse ship,  
That eicher I may split vpon some rocke,  
Or els be swallowed in the purple Paine,

Rather







to knowe a Knaue.

Rather than die in presence of my King,  
Oz bzing that sorow to your aged yeares:  
If this suffice not, then let me be arnde,  
And left alone among ten thousand foes,  
And if my weapon cannot set me free,  
Let them be means to take my lyfe from me.

King. Father, what say you to Philarchus now?

Are you content to pardon his amisse?

Dunstons, I promise thee, it grieues me much,  
To heare what piteous moane Philarchus makes:

He thinks I see sad sorow in his face,

And his humilitie argues him penitent.

But Father, for I will not be the Iudge,

To doome Philarchus either lyfe oz death,

Here take my robes, and iudge him as thou wilt,

Fath. Then vertuous Prince, seeing you will haue it so,

Although the place be farre unfit for me,

I am content your Grace shall haue your mind,

Thus lyke an Ass attyred in collic robes,

Oz lyke a ring thrust in a foule Sowers snout,

So doe these robes and scepter fit mine age:

But for I am Iudge, Philarchus, stand thou forth,

And know, as ther is nothing so good, but it hath some inconuent:

So there is no man whatsoever without some fault: (ence,

Yet this is no argument to maintaine thy wilfull disobedience,

As the Rose hath his prickly, the finest Celuet his bzack,

The sayrest flower his bran, so the best wit his wanton will:

But (Philarchus) thou hast bene more than wanton,

Because thou hast disobeyed the lawes both of God and nature,

The teares that thou hast shed, might warrant me

That thou art penitent for thy amisse:

Besides (my sonne) a fathers naturall care,

Doth challenge pardon for thy first amisse.

King. Father, well said, I see thou pitiest him.

(larchus

Fath. May, stay my Lord, this did I speak as father to Phi-

But now my (Lord) I must speake as a Iudge,

C

And



### A merie knacke

And now Philarchus, marke what I set downe,  
Because thou hast bene disobedient,  
And wronged thy aged father wilfullie,  
And giuen a blow to him that nourisht thee.  
And thereby hast incurd thy mothers curse:  
And in that curse to feele the wrath of God,  
And to be hated on the earth amongst men.  
And for I will be found no partiall Iudge,  
Because I sit as Gods Vezegerent now:  
Here I doe banish thee from Englands bounds,  
And neuer to

King. There stay, now let me speake the rest:  
Philarchus, thou hast heard thy fathers doome,  
And what thy disobedience moued him to,  
Yet for thou wast once bedfellow to the king,  
And that I loued thee as my second selfe,  
Thou shalt go liue in France, in Flanders, Scotland, or els where,  
And haue annual pension sent to thee,  
There maist thou liue in good and honest sort,  
Untill thou be recalled by the King.

Phil. Thanks, gracious King, for this great fauour shoue,  
And may I neuer liue, if I forget,  
Your Graces kind and vnerspected loue,  
In fauouring him, whom all the world forsooke:  
For which my Dynons shall still be spent:  
Heauens may protect your princelie Maestie,  
And louing Father, here vpon my knee,  
Soy for my amisse, I take my leaue,  
Both of your selfe, my King, and countrymen.  
England, farewell, more dearer vnto me,  
Than pen can write, or hart can think of thee. Exit.

King. Farewell Philarchus, and father come to court,  
And for Philarchus sake thou shalt not want.

Fath. Thanks (vertuous king) I humblie take my leaue. Exit  
King. Dunston, I promise thee I was lyke to weepe,  
To heare what pitcous mone Philarchus made,

Dunston.







to knowe a knave.

Dunston. Here your Grace hath shewed your selfe to be  
Edgar so famed for loue and vertuous gouernment.  
And I pray God your Grace may liue to be  
Long Englands king to raigne with verttie. Exeunt.

Enter Honesty, Conicatcher, Broker, a  
Gentleman.

Honesty. **T**Is strange to see how men of honestie,  
Are troubled manie tymes with subtil knauerie:  
For they haue so many clokes to collour their abuses,  
That Honesty may well suspect them, but dares not detect the  
For if he should, they haue by their knauerie  
Got so many friends, that though neuer so bad,  
They will stand in defence with the best.  
I was at the water side, where I saw such deceit,  
I dare not say knauerie, in paying and receiuing  
Custom for outlandish ware, that I wondred to see,  
Yet durst not complaine of, the reason was,  
They were countenanced with men of great wealth,  
Richer than I a great deale, but not honest:  
Then I went into the markets, where I saw petie knauerie:  
In false measuring coine, and in scales,  
That wanted no lesse than two ounces in the pound.  
But all this was nothing, scant worth the talking of:  
But when I came to the Exchange, I espyed in a corner of me  
An Arch-coloner, a Conicatcher I meane. (He,  
Which vsed such grosse coloning, as you would wonder to heare:  
But here he comes fine and bzane,  
Honesty markes him downe for a knaue.

Conicatcher. Why so, tis an ill wind blowes no man to profit.  
And he is but a foole that when all failes cannot liue vpon his wit,  
I haue attyred my selfe lyke a very ciuill citizen,  
To brawne foure scoze pound from a couple of fooles,  
A Gentleman hauing made ouer his land by deed of gift,  
Means to cozen a broker with a false conuieiance:  
Al's one to me, I shall loose nothing by the bargaine,  
But here comes the Broker, I will walk as I regarded him not

### A merie knacke

Broker. Good morrow you sir. I see you keep your house,  
But heare you sir hath the Gentleman that conuiance you told  
me of reply, I hope sir, I shal neede misdoubt no deceit in the mat-  
ter, for I meane plainly, and so I hope do you.

Conicatch. Sir, as concerning the conuiance, I assure you  
And he hath such good interest in it, (tis so good  
That were I furnishe with so much money presently,  
No man in the world should haue it but my selfe,  
And for my owne part, you neede not suspect me,  
For I would not discredit my selfe for a thousand pound,  
For the Gentleman is my very friend,  
And being in some want, is enforced to pawnne lande.  
For the supplying of a present necessitie.  
Tush, the interest is good, I warrant you.

Honesty. And thats much worse, some will say,  
A crafty knaue needs no broker,  
But here is a craftie knaue and a broker to:  
Then imagin there wants not a knaue.

Broker. But tell me sir, when did he promise to be here,  
What, will it be long ere he come?

Conicatch. Nay, it will not be long ere he come,  
For the conueyance was made ere I came from the scriueners,  
And in good time, here he comes, God saue you sir,  
Here is the man I told you of, that wold lend you the money,  
He is a very honest man, and but for my sake I know  
He would not do it, but is the land dispatcht another way:  
If you be ready to seale, he is readie with the money,  
Heare you (sir) you haue a good bargain, dispatch it quicklie.

Brok. Being aduertised by my friend, this honest merchant,  
That you haue certaine land to pawnne for present money,  
Now I had not so much money of mine owne at this tyme,  
But I made meanes to borrow so much of a friend of mine,  
Because I would not haue you fall into bad mens handling

Gent. I thank you sir for this vspeakeable fauour,  
If you deale amisse with me, I am vndone for euer. (pound,

Brok. I would not deal amisse with any man for a thousand  
Honesty.



to knowe a Knaue.

Honestie. And yet he wil cut a mans throte for twelue pence,  
Here is a cluster of knaues, here laches but the baile of Hexham  
Brok. Wel sir, here is the mony, wil it please you seale the as-  
Gent. With all my heart. (surance

Honest. God saue her sirs, and her good friendes, is a poore  
Welshman, come as far as Carnaruan in Wales to receiue a li-  
tle money, and here a has paid her I cannot tell what.  
Here you master, wat is it not hyasse money?

Brok. No, honest fellow, tis a good Angel in gold.

Honest. Who told him my name? heare you maister, a has a  
great deale moze in her bosome, but a will take her leaue.

Conicatch. Nay, stay and dyne with me: I must fetch him ou-  
ner for all his golde.

Hone. Mary I thank her good Maister, I wil waight vpon  
her I warrant you.

Brok. Now sir, haue you sealde and subscribed?

Gent. I haue sir,

Brok. And you deliuer this as your deed to my vlc?

Gent. With all my heart Syr, and hope you will vse me well.

Brok. We wil talk of that another time, here is your money.

Gent. I thank you sir, Ile be gone.

Conicatch. Heare you sir, was not this brauely done?

Gent. Excellent: hold, here is fourty pound, as I promised thee.

Conicatch. I thank you sir: do you heare Sir, you haue got a  
thousand pound by the bargaine: but much good may it doe you.

Brok. God a marcy, and here's fourty pound for thy paines,  
Such another match, and Ile giue thee a hundred pound.

Conicatch. I thank you sir, God blyp: now to my welshmans  
Sirra, let me see thy peece of gold,

Ile tell thee whether it be weight or no:

Hast thou anie moze, Ile giue thee white mony for it.

Honest. Yes, a has a great deale moze in her bosome,

But a will haue no wit money: D a loues led mony.

Conic. Wel, Ile keep the for thee til thou come to my house.

Hon. Why Cutbert, wilt thou neuer leaue thy old knauery?  
Why, we should gree together lyke belles,



## A merie knacke

If thou wert but hanged first,  
 Why we are as neere kin together,  
 As the Cats of Banbery be to the bels of Lincolne,  
 Why man, we are all birds of a feather,  
 And whosoever saies nay, we will hold together.  
 Come you mad slaue, thou dost not know me,  
 Tush, I haue done many better trickes than this.

Conic. Why (you base slaue) take you me for your fellow?  
 Why, I am of good reputation in the citie,  
 And held in account with the best.

Honesty. And yet thou art Cntbert the Conicatcher,  
 The Bailieffs sonne of Hexham, whose father being dead,  
 The deuill carried to hell for his knauerie:  
 How sayest thou, art not thou his sonne?  
 This graue blacke cloake makes you so proud,  
 You haue forgotten who was your father.

Conic. Nay, I haue not forgotten that my father was a Bai-  
 A man that would liue to himselfe. (liefe,  
 And yet in shith, he gaue me nothing at his death,  
 But good counsell, how to liue in the world.  
 But sirra, as thou knowest me, I pray thee bewray me not,  
 And in any thing I can, commaund me.

Honest. Tush, feare not me, I will be as secrete as thy selfe:  
 Out sirra, tis thus, if thou wilt doe one thing,  
 I shall tell thee, I will giue thee an hundred pound,  
 Tis nothing with thee I am sure.

Con. Tush, tel me what it is: He doe it, I warrant thee.

Honest. Nothing but this, to sweare vpon a backe  
 That thou sawest a Gentleman pay a Farmer  
 Foure hundred pound, as the last payment of a Farme,  
 That the said Gentleman bought of him.

Con. Tush, if this be all, let me alone. I will doe it.  
 Why, tis nothing for me to sweare,  
 For I am forsworne already, but when is the day?

Honest. Why to morrow.

Conic. But where shall I meet you?

Hon







to knowe a Knaue.

Honesty. Why vpon the exchange at eight a clocke.

Con. I will not misse, til that time fare well. Exit.

Hon. Farewel, nay, you will scant farewel

By that tyme I haue done, but I must about my busines,

To fynd some knacke to know this knaue at large.

Enter Ethenwald. (the West.

Ethen. The night drawes on, & Phœbus is declining towards

Now shepheards hear their flocks vnto the folds,

And wintred Oxen foddered in their stalles

Now leaue to feede, and gin to take their rest,

Blacke buskies clowdes inuoyon round the globe,

And heauen is couered with a Sable robe,

Now am I come to doe the kings command,

To court a Wench & win her for the King.

But if I lyke her well, I say no more,

'Tis good to haue a hatch before the doze:

But first I will moue her Father to prefer

The earnest suit I haue in canuassing,

So may I see the Maid, woo, wed, I and bed her too

Who is here? what ho,

Enter Osricke.

Os. Earl Ethenwald, welcome, how fares our friends at court

What cause constrains your Honor, that thus late

You visite vs, that dreame not of your comming?

Ethenwald. My Lord, I am come vnlooked for, very true,

So is my cunning yet conceald from you.

Os. Your Honor shall repose you here to night,

And earlie as you please, begin your taske,

Tyme serues not now, come Ethenwald,

As welcome as the King himselfe to me.

Eth. Now Ethenwald, if Fortune fauour thee,

Thou maist p̄proue happie loue to Alfrida. Exit.

Enter Honestie, and the King disguised.

Hon. This is the place, and this the appointed tyme,

I know heel keep his word, for he thinks me his friend,

King. But tell me Honestie, am I not well disguised.

Can

## A merie knacke

Can any man discern me by my lookes to be the King,  
Take heed of that, for then our game is mard:  
And hast thou promised him what reward he shall haue.

Hon. Tush fear not you, for you neuer knew honest man dis-  
semble with his friend,

Though many friends dissemble with honest men:

But, my Lord, the cards be shuffled, and here comes a knaue.

Enter Conicatcher.

Conic. 'Tis strange to see how men of our knowledge liue,  
And how we are hated of the baser sort,  
Because (forsooth) we liue vpon our wit:  
But let the baser sort thinke as they will,  
For he may best be termed a Gentleman,  
That when all sayles, can liue vpon his wit.  
And if all sayles, then haue I got a wench,  
That cuts and deales, to maintaine my expence,  
Now I vse her, as men vse sweetest flowers,  
That while they are sweet and pleasant to the eye,  
I doe regard them for their pleasant smell:  
But when their cullour fades, and sent decays,  
I cast them off for men to trample on:  
But to the purpose, here is the Gentleman  
Whom honest friends did lately tell me of.

Sir, though I had another businesse of import,  
That might haue hindred me for coming here,  
Yet in regard I am loth to breake my word,  
I haue set my other businesse cleane apart,  
Because you should not iudge amisse of me,

Honest. I find you kind Sir, and your self shall see  
How I will labour to requite your curtesie.

This is the honest man I told you of,  
One that will doe you pleasure in the cause,  
So be it you will content him for his paines.

King. 'Tis God forbid, and good Sir, thus it is,  
I bought a farme of one that dwels here by,  
And for an earnest gaue an hundred pound,

The







to knowe a'knaue.

The rest was to be paid as fixe weekes past,  
Now sir, I would haue you as witness,  
That at my house you saw me pay thye hundred pound,  
And for your paines I will giue you a hundred pound:  
Besides, I will stand your friend in what I may,  
You heare the cause, what will your conscience serue you to do it?

Conic. How say you sir, my conscience, then you touch me,  
I tell you sir, my conscience will serue me to doe more than this:  
Why, I haue bene a posse knight in Westminster this xli. year,  
And sworne to that which no one els would venture on.  
Why, I haue sworne against mine owne father for money:  
I haue sworne right or wrong any wayes for money,  
whē I haue receiued money befoze witness, I swore to the contrary  
And do you misdoubt me in so sleight a matter as this,  
When I haue sworne against father, mother, and all my kin?

Honest. I told you sir how resolute you should find him,  
He doeth it without feare, I warrant you: (your purpose,  
I think that in London you could not haue found a man so fit for  
I knew his father (sir) a man of honest reputation,  
And one whose lyfe was witness to the lyfe he led,  
He was a Bailiefe (sir) though I say't, but no Bayliffe that wld  
He had too good a conscience for that. (deceit,

King. Al the better for that, for it should seem by his behauior  
That he hath had good bringing up.

Conicats. Indeed my father in his lyfe time was a man,  
Giuen to the feare of God, and to vse much deuotion.

Hon. I, but he gaue nothing for Gods sake, except it were  
hard words or blowes, and they had bene better kept then giuen:  
But hush, here comes the Iudge.

Enter Perin a Iudge, and Dunston a Farmer.

King. Heare you sir, if you be in readines, here is the Iudge.

Conic. I sir, fear not, I warrant you, is that your aduersary?  
What an old crustt it is!

Honest. I think the villaine hath a face hardened with steel,  
He could neuer be so impudent els.

Dunston. If it please your Worship, this is the man,

D

That

### A merie knacke

That wrongfully would haue my farme from me,  
Facing me downe that he hath paid me that,  
Which he neuer offred, nor I neuer receiued :  
And this day he hath promised to make prooffe,  
That he hath paid me ful foure hundred pound.

King. And so I can, and heres my wities to it,  
That saw me when I paid the money.

Dunston. Why, I am sure he wil not say it,  
I neuer saw the man in all my lyfe.

Conic. No sir: but I saw you, and was a witness,  
When this Gentleman paid you three hundred pound  
As the last payment for the farme he bought.

Perin. But where was the money tendered?

Con. At the Gentlemans house.

Per. You see father, this marchant wil be witness  
That he saw so much money tendered,  
And you receiued it, being full satisfied,  
As the last payment for the farme he bought,  
And if this marchant take his oath against you,  
That seuen daies past he saw the money tendered,  
I must passe sentence then against you needs.  
But wil you swear on the bible this is true?

Coni. I sir, and to that intent I came hether,  
For I wil neuer refuse to swear a truth while I liue

Dunston. Yet ere thou speake, vouchsafe to heare me speake,  
Full three score Winters Gentle sir I haue past,  
And age hath brought gray haire vpon my head.  
Looke but vpon my face, and thou shalt see,  
The perfect patterne of humilitie.  
Thou man of worth, or citizen, what ere thou be,  
Weigh but my charge, and then thou wilt not swear  
I haue fine sonnes, al pretie tender babes,  
That liue vpon the farme that he would haue,  
Twelue hundred sheep do feed vpon the plaines,  
That yearlie bring a great increase to me,  
Besides a hundred Oxen safly fed :

That







to knowe a knaue.

That euerie Winter feed within my stalles,  
And twentie poore men liuing neere my house,  
I daylie feed, and all vpon my farme:  
So but among my neighbours, where I dwell,  
And heare what good report they giue of me.  
The poore man neuer yet went from my doze,  
But to my power I did releene his want:  
I was no farmer that enricht my selfe:  
By raising markets and oppressing poore,  
But I haue sold my cozne full many tymes  
At better rate than I could wel affoord,  
And all to help my needie brethren:  
Then ere thou swearest, cal al these things to mind,  
And thou wilt weep, and leaue to sweare vntueths -  
Confusion to thy bodie and thy soule.

Perin. Alas, if thou be wel aduised, take thy oath,  
But yet remember befoze whome thou swearest,  
The God of trueth and perfect equitie,  
Which will reuenge wrong to the innocent,  
With thousand plagues and tortors worse than death.

Con. By the holy contents of this T yble,  
And by that iust God, befoze whome I stand, I sawe thy map -  
King. Peace, shamelesse villain, execrable wretch,

Monster of nature, degenerate miscreant,  
Who euer knew or heard so vile an oath,  
Nildly pronounc'd by such a damned slave,  
Haue I such monstrous vipers in my land,  
That with their verie breaths infect the aire,  
Say Dunston, hast thou euer heard the lyke.

Dunst. My Liege, such lochsome weeds must needs infect the  
Such Cankers perishe both the root and branch, (cozne,  
Vnlesse they be soone spied and weeded out :

Kim. He be the husbandman to mowe such Tares,  
Here Honesty, let him be manacled:  
And scar his forehead, that he may be knowne,  
As Cain for murder, he for perurie.



A merie knacke

Conicar. I beseech your Grace be good to me.  
Hon. I, you shal haue a cold yron clapt in your fore head,  
A hot one I would say, you are a slaue indeede.

Conicatcher. Good Honesty.

Hone. Good villaine, theres no help for you.

Exeunt

Enter Ethenwald alone.

Eth. My fancies thoughts, lyke the labouring Spider,  
That spreads her nets, to entrap the sillie Flye:  
Or lyke the restless billowes of the seas,  
That euer alter by the fleeting ayre,  
Still houering past their wonted passions,  
Makes me amazed in these extremities,  
The King commands me on his embassage,  
To Ofricks daughter, beauteous Alfrida,  
The height and pride of all this bounding itt,  
To poste amaine, plead loue in his behalfe,  
To court for him, and woo, and wed the mayd,  
But haue you neuer heard that cheame,  
Decent in loue is but a merriment,  
To such as seeke a rituall to preuent,  
Whether (vntaught) romes my vnruly thoughts,  
It is the King I colen of his choise,  
And he wil brook Carl Ethenwald should prooue  
Falle to his Prince, especially in loue.  
The thus it shal be, Ile tel the king the maid is faire,  
Of nut browne cullour, comelie and fair spoken,  
Worthle companion to an Earle or for  
But not a Bride for Edgar, Englands King,  
This will alay the strong effects in loue.  
Fame wrought in Edgars mind of Alfrida,  
Wel, Ile to court, and dallie with the King,  
And worke some means to draw his mynde from loue.

Enter a Knight, Squire, and Farmer.

Knight **N**eighbour Walter I cannot but admire to see  
How house keeping is decayed within  
this thirtie years,

But







to knowe a Knaue.

But where the fault is God knowes, I knowe not:  
My father in his lyfe tyme gaue hospitality to all strangers, and  
Distressed traueillers, his table was neuer emptye of bread, beefe,  
And beere, he was woont to keep a hundred call men in his hall,  
He was a feaster of all commers in generall,  
And yet was he neuer in want of money:  
I thinke God did blesse him with increase, for his bountifull mind  
Farm, Truly sir, I am sorrye, you ar fallen into decay,  
In that you want to maintaine houshold charge,  
And whereof comes this want, I will tell you sir,  
Tis only thow your great housekeeping:  
Be ruled by me, and doe as I aduise you:  
You must learne to leaue so great a traine of men,  
And keepe no more than needs of force you must,  
And those you keepe, let them be simple men,  
For they will be content with simple fare,  
Keepe but a boy or two within your house,  
To run of errands, and to wait on you,  
And for your kitchen, keep a woman cooke,  
One that will serue for thirtie shillings a yeare:  
And by that means you saue two liueries,  
And if ye will keep retainers towards you,  
Let them be Farmers, or rich husbandmen,  
For you shal find great profite (sir) in keeping them:  
For if you stand in need of cozne or hay,  
Send but to them, and you may haue it strait:  
And if you kill a Beefe, let it be so leane  
The Butcher nor the Grasper will not buy it,  
Your drinke is too strong, and tastes too much of male,  
Tush, single beere is better far, both for your profite, and your ser-  
And at a Christmasse time feast none at al, (uantes health)  
But such as yeeld you some commoditie:  
I meane such as will send you now and then,  
Fat Geese and Capons to keep house withall,  
To these and none els would I haue you liberall.  
Knight, Why neighboz, my goods are lent me to no other end

## A merie knacke

But to releue my needie brethren, but God I hope hath in store  
Far. I, trust you to that, & you may hap die a begger: (for me.

Squ. Why sir, if he should not trust in God, in whom should he  
trust, for God is the giuer of all good whatsoeuer.

Far. True, and yet tis good for a man to trust to himselfe now  
and then: for if you be downe, and bid God help you by, and do not  
help your self, you may fortune lie and perish: and therefore, serue  
God on Sundayes, as you are appointed, and thereby hope to be  
saued, for by your almes deeds you cannot, for if you giue to the  
poore, there be manie will say, he thinks to bee saued by his almes  
deedes: and thus you shal be ill thought on for your good wil, and  
therefore learn to prouide for your self, let God prouide for the poore

Knig. I tel you neighbor, my great grandfather, & all my pre-  
decessors haue bene held in good regard for their good house kee-  
ping, and (God willing) their good names shal neuer take an ex-  
tent in me, for I will (God willing) keepe such hospitalitie to my  
death, as my state can maintaine, and I will rather sell my land,  
to maintaine house-keeping, then keeping my land make sale of my  
good name for housekeeping, but stay, who comes here.

Enter two poore old men and a Bayliefe.

One old man. God saue you sir, I pray be good to me for chaunce  
a poore man, and I cannot tell what you will doe, for you say my  
horse hath broken into your corn, or your corne into my horse,  
But indeed my neighbor saw your boy driue my horse into a field  
But Ile stand to nothing, nowe I am warnd with a peece of pa-  
per, and a litle ware, to prepare or proceed to London,  
And there I am inuented, I cannot tell for what.

The Bayliefe here hath arrested me ere I was weary against my  
will: he said it was upon your suit, & yet he laid his hands on me,  
Ray mose, on my shoulder.

Another old. And sir, and it may please you, I borrowed certen  
corne, and I brought you your corne again, and yet you rest me.

Far. True sir, but then was corne sold for foure shillings a bu-  
shell, and now tis sold for two.

Knig. I sir, but he borrowed corne, and promised to pay you corne  
again, and you can haue but so much as you lent:

For







to knowe a Knaue.

For if he should pay you at the rate you demande,  
You wold haue for the twentie bushels you lent, fourtie,  
Which were neither right nor conscience.

Far. O sir, I pray let me alone with my conscience,  
You wold haue me giue al I haue away to the poore; I want as  
you do, I pray let me alone to deale for my selfe: heare you, haue  
you rested them?

Bail. I haue sir as you commanded me.

Far. Then to prison with them, til they haue paid such dam-  
mages as the law shal award them.

One poor. Hear you sir, if you shuld bid your boy break downe  
a gap, and driue in my horse, twere litle better than plaine knaue-  
rie, for my horse is as honest a horse, as any is in this towne.

Another. Wel neighbor, we wil haue the horse examined be-  
fore an officer, and my boy Jack shal wyte what the horse speaks  
and if the horse say a was driuen in against his wil,  
Then you may haue the law of him, neighbor,  
For all the horses in the parish wil be swozne for his horse.

But Ile stand to nothing. (with them.)

Far. Wel, to prison with the til they haue paid your due, away

One poor. Nay, I pray, be more miser able to me, and I wil  
giue you fourtie shillings when I haue it.

Far. By the Mas the knaue hath a pretie cottage,  
Ile see and I can get that: sirra, you haue an old cottage,  
If you will make me that ouer by deed of gift,  
I am content to draw my action.

Another p. My house: why tis my goods, my wyfe, my land,  
My horse my asse, or any thing that is his: no you Caterpillar,  
I will neuer make away my house, I wil die first.

Squi. But tel me sir, howe much wold you haue of them for  
their trespassse?

Far. Wary, for fourtie shillings, and yet I befriend them,  
Why sir, I hope you will not pay it for them?

Kai. But I wil: sirra Bailie, I will answere the poore mens  
debts, and come home to me for thy fee anon, go old men,  
Get you home and praise God.

## A merie knacke

One poor. Mary Iesus bleſſe you maſter, how many ſuch good  
Knights haue you now a dayes?

Anoth. Too few, neighbour, the more is the better. Exeunt  
But come lets away.

Knight. But who comes here?

Enter Perin and Honesty.

Per. God ſaue you gentlemen, the king greets you, and at this  
hauing ſome occaſion, to ſee many, hath ſent to know (time,  
What you that be Knights and Squires will lend his Grace,  
And you maſter Farmer, be briefe (ſir) for I cannot ſtay.

Kni. Sir, though houſe-keeping be ſome hindrance to my willing  
mind by reaſon it robs me of that, which ſhould bewray my louing  
mind both to my prince & country, money I meane which at this  
time I ſtand in ſome want of, yet of that ſmall ſtoke that I haue,  
am willing to impart the lending of the king xx. pound, and more.  
I aſſure you I am not able.

Perin. Very wel, and what ſay you maſter Squire.

Squire. I ſay that my reuenues are but ſmall, yet I will  
lend his Maieſtie ten pound:

Per. Very wel, but what ſaith the Farmer?

What can he ſpare the King?

Far. Marry ſir, I am a poore Farmer, & yet I can aſſure  
To lend the King a hundred or two of pounds,  
And heare you ſir, if you prefer a ſuit I haue to the King,  
I will giue you fourtie Angels for your paines:  
Beſides, I will giue you the keeping of a dozen ſaves:  
And now and then meat for you and your horſe.  
If you come to my houſe and lie a whole yeare.

Per. Why thats well ſaid, and I commend thy honeſt mind,  
Would all men wer of thy mind:  
I warrant thee, thou art an honeſt man, & one that loues the king  
But tel me, what wouldeſt thou haue me doe?

Far. Nothing but procure me the Kings letter to carrey coyn  
beyond ſea, for in England it is ſo good cheap, that a man can  
make no liuing by ſelling thereof: therfore if the King will grant  
me his letter, I will at any time, lend him five or ſix hundred  
pound.







to knowe a knaue.

and perhaps neuer ask it again, and I will not forget your paines.

Per. Sir, feare not, I will do it for you, I warrant you,  
For I tel you, I can do much with the King. (for,

Hon. I beleue you will do moze than you wil be commended  
The Courtier resembleth the Jay, that decketh her self with the  
feathers of other birds, to make her self glorious:

So the Courtier must be brane, tho he be hangd at the gallous.

Far. Well sir, will it please you to come and dine with me.

Per. I thanke you sir hartly.

Far. But whats he there in your company.

Perin. A plaine fellow, and his name is Honesty.

Far. O let him go where he will, for he shal not dine with me.

Hon. See how the Farmer feares my name,  
What wold he doe if he knew my nature?

But hear you (maister Courtier) Shall I dine with you?

I promise you sir, I am very hungrie,

Per. Truly Honesty, if I were furnishe with money.

I would not stick to giue thee thy dinner,

But now thou seest I am but a guest my selfe.

Far. Truly honest fellow, if I were certaine of my cheere, I  
wold bid thee to dinner, but know not my prouisiō I promise thee

Kni. Heare you sir, will it please you to take part of a peece of  
beefe with me, you shal be welcome.

Perin. I thank you sir, but I must dine with my honest friend  
here, els I would not refuse your gentle offer. Exeunt.

Hon. See how he can vse my name and not me,  
But I perceiue I may goe dine with Duke Humfrie,  
God bwy Gentlemen, for none here hath occasion to vse Honesty

Kni. Yes Honesty, thou shalt be my brothers guest and mine.

Hon. Mary and I thank you to, for now the world may say,  
That Honesty dines with Hospitality to day, Exeunt.

Enter Osrick and Alfrida, and to them Ethenwald,

Osr. **D**aughter, see that you entertaine the Earle,  
As best becomes his state and thy degree:

He comes to see whether Fame haue worthily  
Bene niggard, in commending thee or no,  
So shall thy vertues be admired at the court,



And thou be praised for kind and debonaire,  
For curtesie contents a Courtier oft:  
When nothing els seemes pleasant in his eyes.

Alfr. Father, you shall perceiue that Alfrida  
Will doe her best in honouring of your age,  
To entertaine the Earle of Cornwell so,  
That he shall think him highlie fauoured,  
Thro' louing speech and curteous entertain.

Ol. How fares my L. of Cornwel, what displeased  
Do troubled with a mood thats male content?

Ech. Not male content, and yet I am not well,  
For I am troubled with a painfull rume,  
That when I would be mery, troubles me,  
And commonlie it holds me in my eyes.  
With such extreames, that I can scantily see.

Ofr. How long haue you bene troubled with the  
Do is it a pain that you haue vsuall? (pain,  
Do is it some water, that by taking cold,  
Is falne into your eyes, and troubles you?

Ech. I cannot tel, but sure it paines me much,  
Nor did it euer trouble me till now,  
For till I came to lodge within your house,  
My eyes were cleare, and I neuer felt the paine.

Ol. I am soyy that my house shuld cause your grief  
Daughter, if you haue any skil at all,  
I pray you vse your cunning with the Earle,  
And see if you can ease him of his paine.

Alfr. Father, such skill as I receiued of late,  
By reading many pretie penne receites,  
Both for the ache of head, and paine of eyes.  
I wil, if so it please the Earle to accept it,  
Indenour what I may to comfort him.  
My Loz, I haue waters of approued worth,  
And such as are not common to be found:  
Any of which, if it please your honour, vse them,  
I am in hope, will help you to your sight,

Ech. (Marchesse Alfrida) they will doe me no good.







to knowe a knaue,

For I am troubled only when I looke,

Alfrida, On what (my Lord) or whome?

Ethen. I cannot tell,

Alf. Why let me see your eyes (my Lord) looke vpon me,

Eth. Then twil be worse,

Alf. What, if you looke on me: then He be gone.

Eth. Nay stay, sweet loue, stay beauteous Alfrida,

And giue the Earle of Cornwel leaue to speake:

Know Alfrida, thy beautie hath subdued,

And captiuat the Earle of Cornwels heart

Briefly, I louethee, seeme I neere so bold,

So rude and rashlie to prefer my sute,

And if your father giue but his consent,

Caled be that paine that troubles Ethenwald,

And this considered, Ofricke shall procure,

My father, and his daughter be my loue,

Speake Ofrick, shall I haue her I or no?

Of. My Lord with al my hart, you haue my consent

If so my daughter please to condescend,

Ethen: But what saith Alfrida?

Alf. I say (my Lord) that seing my father grants,

I will not gainsay, what his age thinks meet,

I do appoint my selfe (my Lord) at your dispose,

Eth. Well Ofrick, nowe you see your daughter's mine,

But tel me when shall be the wedding day,

Of. On Monday next, till then you are my guest.

Ethen. Well Ofricke, when our nuptiall rites are past,

I must to Court of businesse to the King,

Alfr. Let that be as you please my Lord,

But stay not long, for I shall hardlie brooke your absence then,

Eth. Feare not Alfrida, I will not stay there long,

But come, let vs in Father, pray leas the way,

Enter the King and Dunston.

King. TEl me Dunston, what thinkest thou of the fauors of

Dun. I thinke of Kings fauors as of a Marigold flower,

As long as the Sun beeth openeth her leaues,

## A merick knacke

And with the least cloud closeth againe:  
 O: lyke the Violets in America, that in sommer yeeld an odiffe.  
 And in winter a most infectious saour: (roue smell,  
 For at every full sea they flourish, or at every dead ope they bader  
 The fish Palerna being perfect white in the calme,  
 Yet turneth blacke with every storme:  
 O: lyke the trees in the deserts of Africa,  
 That flourish but while the south-west wind bloweth:  
 Euen so (my Lord) is the saours of kings to them they saour,  
 For as their saours giue life, so their frownes yeeld death.

King. Well said, Dunston, but what merites he that dissemble  
 with his Soueraigne?

Dunston. In my opinion (my Lord) he merites death.

King. Then assure thy selfe, if Echenwald dissemble, he shall  
 die: but who comes here? Perin, what newes, that thou comest  
 in such hast? and what is he that beares thee company?

Per. It is my gracious Lord an honest man,  
 And one it seemes that loues you Maestie:  
 For as your Grace gaue me in charge, (could make,  
 I went about into the countrey, to see what summes of money I  
 Among the cheefest of the communaltie:  
 And amongst the richest Knights that I could fynd,  
 They would lend your Grace at most but twenty pound,  
 And every Squire would lend you Grace but ten:  
 Then came I amongst the rest to this plaine man,  
 And asked him what he would lend the king,  
 He answered Sir, you see I am but poore,  
 Not halfe so wealchy as a Knight or Squire,  
 And yet in signe of dutie to his Grace,  
 I wil lende his Maestie two hundred pound.

King. Thanks honest fellow, for thy loue to vs,  
 And if I may but pleasure thee in ought,  
 Command me to the uttermost I may:  
 England hath too few men of thy good minde.

Enter Honestie and Piers plowman.  
 Honestie, what newes: where hast thou bene so long?



to knowe a Knaue.

Honest. A my Lord, I haue bene searching for a priuie knaue  
One (my Lord) that feeds vpon the pooze commons,  
And makes pooze Piers ploughman weare a thread bare coate,  
It is a farmer (my Lord) which buyes vp all the corn in the mar-  
ket, and sends it away beyond seas, & thereby feeds the enemye.

Kin. Alas, pooze piers plowman, what ailest thou: why dost  
thou weep, peace man, if any haue offended thee,  
Thou shalt be made amends vnto the most.

piers plow. I beseech your Grace to pitie my distresse,  
There is an unknowne theefe that robs the common wealth,  
And makes me and my pooze wife and children beg for mainte-  
The tyme hath bene (my Lord) in diebus illis, (nauce,  
That the Plowmans coat was of good homespun russet cloth,  
Whereof neither I nor my seruants had no want,  
Though now both they and I want,  
And all by this unknowne Farmer;  
For there cannot be an aker of ground to be sold,  
But he will find money to buy it: nay my Lord, he hath money  
to buy whole Lordships, and yet but a Farmer,  
I haue kept a pooze house where I dwel this four score yeare,  
Yet was I neuer driuen to want till now:  
I beseech your Grace, as you haue still bene iust,  
To seek redress for this oppression  
I beseech your Grace reade my humble petition.

Kin. Let me see the humble petition, of pooz piers plowman,  
Alasse pooze piers, I haue heard my father say, (wealth,  
That piers plowman was one of the best members in a commū  
For his table was neuer emptie of bread, beefe, and beere,  
As a help to all distressed traucilers: but where thou tellest me  
I harbour him, and he is vailie vnder my elbow,  
I assure thee tis more than I know, for I harbour none but this  
which is my honest friend.

Hon. Is this your honest friend: the deuill a is (my Lord)  
This is he: if you doubt my word to be true, call in Clarke of the  
Assyses, now shall your Grace see,  
How Honesty can shake out a knaue in this company:



## A meele knacke

Enter Clarke of the Assyse.

Sirra, tell me who hath most pooze men in suit at this Assyse.

Clarke. That hath Walter would haue more.

He hath one pooze man in suit for certayne Barlie,

And another for that his horse was taken in his cozne.

Honest. But what inditements are against him, read them

Read the Inditement.

Clarke. First he hath comeyed cozne out of the land to feede the  
Cuenie. Next, he hath turned pooze Piers Plowman out of  
dozes by his great raising of rents.

Next, he is knowne to bee a common disturber of men of their  
quiet, by seruing writs on them, and bringing them to London,  
to their better vndring.

Also, he keeps cozne in his barne, and suffers his brechren and  
neighbours to lie and want, and thereby makes the market so  
deare, that the poore can buy no cozne.

King. Broughstow sit upon thee, thou monster of nature,

To seeke the better vndring of manie, to enrich thy selfe:

Honesty, take him, and ple him as thou wilt.

Honesty. Come sir, I thinke I found out your knauerie,

Away sir, and beare your fellow to rypande.

Exeunt omnes but the King and Dunstom.

Enter Ethenwald.

Eth. Healt and good hap befall your Maiestie,

King. Ethenwald welcome, how fares our beauntious loue,

Be briefe man, what, wilt he loue or no?

Eth. Then as your Grace did giue to me in charge,

I haue discharged my dutie euery way,

And commended with the main you to commend:

For when the Sun, rich father of the day,

Eie of the world, King of the spangled vail,

Had run the circuit of the Horizon,

And that Arctofex, the night's bright star,

Had brought forth Luna from the purpled mayne,

Where she was halping with her wanton loue,

To lend her light to wearie trauglers.

Then







to knowe a Knaue,

Then twas my chance to arrive at Ostricks house  
But being late I could not then unfold  
The message that your Grace had given in charge  
But in the moone Aurora did appeare,  
At sight of whom the Welkin fraight did cleare.  
Then was the spangled vail of heauen dyane in,  
And phoebeus rose lyke heauens imperiall Kinge  
And ere the Sun was mounted five degrees  
The maide came downe and gaue me the good day,

King, But being come, what said she then?  
How lykest thou her, what is she faire or no?

Eth. My Lord, she is coloured lyke the Scythia Maide,  
That challenged Lucio at the Olympian games,  
Well bodied, but her face was something blacke,  
Lyke those that follow household businesse:  
Her eyes wer hollow sunke into her head,  
Which makes her haue a clowdie countenance,  
She hath a pretie tongue, I must confesse,  
And yet (my Lord) she is nothing eloquene.

King. Why then (my Lord,) theres nothing good in her.

Eth. Yes my Lord, she is fit to serue an Earle or so,  
But far unfit for Edgar Englands King.

King. So then she is fit for Ethenwald our Cornish Earle,  
But far unfit for Edgar Englands king:  
Well Ethenwald, I sound your policie:  
But tell me ifaith, dost thou loue the maide.  
Speake cruellie man, dissemble not.

Ethen. I doe (my gracious Lord) and therewithall,  
Intreate your Maiestie to pardon me.

King. Ethenwald, I am content to pardon thee,  
And will be with thee my selfe ere long,  
To doe thee honour in thy marriage,  
And therefore Ethenwald thou must depart,  
And leaue vs til we visite thee at home.

Eth. My gracious Lord I humbly take my leaue.

Durst. If it please your Grace pardon me, and giue me leaue

# A merie knacke

I would gladly bring my Nephew on the way.

K. With all my heart Dunston, but stay not long.

Eth. I humbly take my leave of your Majesty.

Exeunt Dunst. and Ethenwald.

Kin. Farewel Ethenwald, but Perin tell me now,  
What dost thou thinke of Alfrida,

Is she so foule as Ethenwald reports her,  
Beleeue me then she had bene better for me.

per. My gracious Lord, Ethenwald hath dissembled with  
For Alfrida is fair and vertuous: (your Majesty,

For last night, being in private conference,

He told me he had deuiled a mean

To collour with the King by forged excuse.

No, no, (quoth he) my Alfrida is faire,

As is the radiant North Star Chystraline,

That guides the wet and wearie Traveller,

Soult with the surge of Neptunes watery main,

And thus my Lord, he fell to praising her,

And from his pocket straight he drew this counterfeit,

And said twas made by beauteous Alfrida.

King. I late more faire than is the Suns bright beames,

Or snow white Alpes beneath faire Cyathea,

Who would refuse with Hercules to spin,

When such faire faces bears vs companie.

Faire Polyxena neuer was so faire:

Not she that was proud loue to Troylus.

Great Alexanders loue, Queen of Amazons,

Was not so faire as is faire Alfrida;

But perin, be thou secrete to the King,

And I will sound these subtil practizes,

And Ethenwald, be sure I will quittrance thee,

And teach thee how to dallie with thy King,

But perin lers to Court vntill to morne,

And then wee'll take horse and away.

Exeunt.

Enter three men of Goteham, to wit, a Miller,

a Cobler, and a Smith.

Miller,







to knowe a knaue.

Miller. Now let vs consult among our selues,  
How to misbehaue our selues to the Kings worship,  
Iesus blesse him: and when he comes, to deliuer him this petition  
I thinke the Smith were best to do it, for hees a wise man.

Cobler. Naighbour, he shal not doe it, as long as Ifferay the  
Translator is Mayor of the towne. (the Place:

Smith. And why, I pray, because I would haue put you from

Miller. No, not for that, but because he is no good fellow,  
Nor he will not spend his pot for companie.

Smith. Why (sir) there was a god of our occupation, and I  
charge you by vertue of his godhead, to let me deliuer the petition.

Cob. But loke you your God was a Tuckold, and his God-  
head was the horne, and thats the Armes of the Godhead you call  
upon. So, you are put down with your occupation, and now I wil  
not grace you so much as to deliuer the petition, for you.

Smith. What, dispraise our trade?

Cob. Nay, neighbour, be not angrie, for Ile stand to nothing  
onlie but this.

Smith. But what; beare witness a giues me the But, and I  
am not willing to shoot: Cobler, I will talke with you: nay, my  
bellowes, my colctrough, and my water shall enter armes with  
you for our trade: O neighbour, I can not beare it, nor I wil not  
beare it.

Mil. Heare you, neighbour. I pray conswade your self and be  
not wilful, & let the Cobler deliuer it, you shal see him mar all,

Smith. At your request I will commit my selfe to you,  
And lay my selfe open to you, lyke an Dyffer.

Mil. Ile tell him what you say: Heare you naighbour, we haue  
consulted to let you deliuer the petition, for it wisely for the cre-  
dite of the towne.

Cob. Let me alone, for the Kings Carvinger was here,  
He sayes the King will be here anon.

Smith. But heark, by the Mass he comes.

Enter the King, Dunston, and Perin.

King. How now Perin, who haue we here?

Cob. We the townes men of Goteham,

Hearing

## A merie knacke

Hearing your Grace would come this way,  
Did thinke it good for you to stay,  
But hear you, neighbours, bid somebody ring the bells,  
And we are come to you alone to deliver our petition.

Kin. What is it Perin, I pray thee reade.

per. Nothing but to haue a licence to brew strong Ale thise a  
week, and he that comes to Gotscham, and will not spende a penie  
on a pot of Ale, if he be a dyte, that he may fast.

Kin. Well sirs, we grant your petition.

Cob. We humble thanke your royall Maiesty.

King. Come Dunston, lets away.

Exeunt omnes.

Enter Ethenwald alone.

Eth. Ethenwald, be aduised, the King hath sent to thee,  
Say, more, he means to come and visite thee,  
But why, I theres the question?  
Why ris for this, to see if he can find,  
A front whereon to graft a paire of hoznes:  
But in plain reatims he comes to Cuckhold me,  
And for he means to doe it without suspect,  
He sends me word he means to visite me:  
The King is amorous, and my wyfe is kinde,  
So kind (I feare) that she will quickly yeeld  
To any motion that the King shal make:  
Especially if the motion be of loue:  
For Pliny wytes, women are made lyke waxe,  
Apt to receiue any impression:  
Whose mindes are lyke the Iannampst,  
That eates, yet cries, and neuer is sacrificed:  
Well, be as it is, for Ile be sure of this,  
It shall be no waies prejudice to me:  
For I will set a skreen before the fyre,  
And so preuent what otherwyse would ensue:  
Twere good I questioned with my father first,  
To heare how he affected towards the King.  
What ho.

Enter Ofrick and Alfrida.

Ofr. Ethenwald, my senne, what newes?







to knowe a knaue.

Ethen. Why aske you? I am sure you haue heard the newes.

Ofr. Not yet, I promise you my Lord. (visit you.

Ethen. Why then tis thus, the King doth meane to come and

Ofr. And welcome shal his Majesty be to me,

That in the wane of my decreasing yeares,

Wouclases this honour to Earle Ostricks house.

Ethen. So then, you meane to entertaine him well?

Ofr. What els my Sonne?

Eth. Nay, as you will, but heare you wyfe, what do you think  
in this, that Edgar means to come and be your guest?

Alfr. I thinke my Lord he shall be welcom then,

And I hope that you will entertaine him so:

That he may know how Ofrick honours him:

And I will be attyred in cloth of Bis,

Beset with Orient pearle, fetcht from rich Indian

And all my chamber shall be richly,

With Aras hanging, fetcht from Alexandria,

Then will I haue rich Counterpointes and muske,

Calamon, and Cassia, sweet smelling Amber Grerce,

That he may say, Venus is come from heauen.

And left the Gods to marie Ethenwald.

Eth. I swoun, they are both agreed to cuckold me,

But heare you wyfe, while I am master of the Bark,

I meane to keepe the helmsster in my hand:

My meaning is, you shall be rulde by me,

In being disguised till the King be gone,

And thus it shall be, for I will haue it so.

The King hath neuer seene thee I am sure,

Nor shall he see thee now, if I can chuse:

For thou shalt be attyred in some base weedes,

And Kate the kitchin maide shall put on chine:

For being richly tyed, as she shall be,

She will serue the turne to keep him companie.

Ofr. Why, men that heare of this will make a scozne of you,

Eth. And he that lies with this wil make a boyne for me.

It is prouough, it must be so.



A merie knacke!

Alf. He thinks twere better otherwaies. Exit Alfrida.

Ethenw. I thinke not so, will you be gone?  
 Father, let me alone, He breake her of her will,  
 We that are married to young wines, you see,  
 Must haue a speciall care vnto their honestie:  
 For should we suffer them to haue their will:  
 They are apt (you know) to fall to any ill.  
 But here comes the King.

Enter the King, Dunston, and Perin to Ethenwald.

Ki. Earle Osricke, you must needs hold vs excused,  
 Though boldely thus vnbid we visite you:  
 But knowe the cause that moued vs leaue our Court,  
 Was to doe honour to Earle Ethenwald:  
 And see his louelie Bride, faire Alfrida.

Osrick. My gracious Lord, as welcome shall you be,  
 To me, my Daughter, and my sonne in Law,  
 As Titus was vnto the Roman Senators,  
 When he had made a conquest on the Goths:  
 That in requitall of his seruice done,  
 Did offer him the imperiall Diademe:  
 As they in Titus, we in your Grace still synd,  
 The perfect figure of a Princelie mind.

King. Thankes Osrick, but I thinke I am not welcome,  
 Because I cannot see faire Alfrida:  
 Osricke, I will not stay, nor eat with thee,  
 Till I haue seene the Earle of Cornwels wife.

Ethen. If it please your Maiestie to stay with vs,  
 My wyfe shal wayt as handmaid on your Maiesties  
 And in her dutie shew her husbands loue:  
 And in good tyme, my Lord, see where she comes:

Enter the kitchen maid in Alfridas apparel.  
 Alfrida, you must leaue your kitchen tricks,  
 And vse no words but princelie Maiestie.

Maid. Now Iesus blesse your honourable Grace,  
 Come I pray, sit down, you are welcome by my troth,  
 As God saue me heres neuer a napkin, he, he.

Come







to knowe a Knaue;

Come on, I pray eat some plums, they be sugar,  
Heres good drinke by Ladie, why do you not eate? (eat.

Ki. Nay, pray thee eat Alfrida, it is ynough for me to see thee  
Maid. I thank you hartily: by my troth heres neuer a cussen  
By my troth Ile knock you anon, go to.

Per. Oh Lord, this is not Alfrida, this is the kitchin maid.

Kin. Peace Perin, I haue found their subtiltie,  
Ethenwald, I pray thee let me see thy kitchin Maid,  
He thinks it is a pretie homely Wench:  
I promise thee, Ethenwald, I like her well.

Eth. Oh Lord, she is a homelie kitchin maid,  
And one whose bringing vp hath bene but rude:  
And far unfit for Edgars companie:  
But if your Grace want merrie companie,  
I will send for Ladies wise and courteous.  
To be associates with your Maestie.

O, if your Grace will haue Musicians sent for,  
I will fetch your Grace the best in all this land.

Kin. Ethenwald, no, I will haue the kitchin maid,  
And therefore, if you loue me, send for her.  
For till she come I cannot be content.

Eth. Father, I will not fetch her: wounds, see where she comes

Enter Alfrida in the kitchin maids attyre.

Alfrida. Successful fortune and his hearts content,  
Daily attend the person of the King.

And Edgar know that I am Alfrida, daughter to Ofrick,  
And lately made the Earle of Cornwall wyle.

King. Why, is not this Alfrida?

Alf. No, my good Lord, it is the kitchin maid,  
Whom Ethenwald in too much loue to me,  
Hath thus attyde to dallie with the King. (and by.

Maid. By my troth (my Lord) she lies, go to, Ile course you by

Kin. Away (base strumpet) get thee from my sight.

Mai. So your waies, you are a cogging knaue I warrant you.

Kin. Base Ethenwald, dissembler that thou art,  
So to dissemble with thy Soueraigne,

### A merie knacke

And after wards vnder a shewe of loue,  
Thou camst to looth thy leasing to the King,  
Meaning by that to make me to conceiue,  
That thy intent was iust and honourable:  
But see, at last thou hast deceiued thy selfe,  
And Edgar hath found out thy subtiltie,  
Which to requite, thinke Edgar is thy enemye,  
And vowes to be reuenged for this ill.  
Go to thy husband beauteous Alfrida,  
For Edgar can subdew affects in loue.

Alf. Thanks, gracious King, myrour of curtesie,  
Whose vertuous thoughts bewray thy princely mind  
And makes thee famous amongst thy enemies:  
For what is he that beares of Edgars name,  
And will not yeeld him praise as he deserues.  
Nor hath your Grace euer bene praised more,  
Or feared more iust in any action,  
Than you shall be in conquering your desires,  
And yeelding pardon to Earle Echenwald.

King. Will you be gone?

(Alf. & Ech.

Alf. My gracious Lord, I humbly take my leaue. Exit.

King. How am I wronged, and yet without redresse?

Dunst. Haue patience good my Lord, and call to mind  
How you haue liued praised for vertuous gouernment,  
You haue subdued lust vnto this day,  
And bene reputed wise in gouernment,  
And will you blemish all your honours got,  
In being tearmed a foule Adulterer.

King. Dunston, forbear for I will haue it so,  
It bootes thee not to counsaile me in this,  
For I haue sworn the death of Echenwald,  
And he shall die, or Edgar will not liue.  
Dunston, it is enough, I am resolu'd.

Exit.

Dun. Nay, if it be so, then Echenwald shall not die,  
And since incantations can not serue the turne:  
I will make make proofe for once what Arte will doe,

Asmoroth







to knowe a Knaue.

Asmoroeth ascende, veni Asmoroeth, Asmoroeth veni,  
Enter the Deuill.

Deuill. What wilt thou?

Dunst. Tel me what means the King?

Deu. I wil not tell thee.

Dunst. I charge thee by the eternall liuing God,  
That keeps the Prince of darknes bound in chaines,  
And by that Sun, that thou wouldest gladly see,  
By heauen and earth, and euery liuing thing,  
Tel me that which I did demand of thee.

Deu. Then thus, the king doth mean to murther Ethenwald

Dunst. But where is the king?

Deu. Seeking for Ethenwald.

Dunst. But He preuent him, follow me inuisible.

Deu. I wil.

Exeunt.

Enter the Priest.

Priest. I haue bene this morning with a friend of mine,  
That would borrow a small summe of money of me,  
But I haue learned the best assurance a man can haue,  
In such a matter is a good pawn of twise the value,  
Or bonds sufficient for fve times the quantitie.  
He is my neere kinsman, I confesse, and a Clergie man,  
But sicke shillings is money, & though I think I might trust him  
Simply with it for a tweluemoneth, where hee craues it but for a  
moneth, yet simply I will not be so simple:  
For I will borrow his gelding to ride to the Terme,  
And keep away a iust fortnight:  
If then he pay me my money, I will deliuer him his horse,  
I wold be loth to lose my mony, or craue assurance of my kinsman,  
But this may be done to trie me, & I meane lykewise to try him.  
This is plain, though trulie (brethren) something subtil.  
But here comes one woud faine take my house of me.

Neighbor. Sir, I am a poore man, and I wil giue you thirty  
shillings a yere, if I may haue it you shal be sure of your money.  
pr. Trulie brother in Christ, I cannot afford it of the price,  
I must let my house to liue, I ask no gain, but who comes here?

## A merie knacke

Enter Honestie and a Beggar.

Beg. I beseech you good maister for Gods sake, giue one penny to the poore, lame, and blind, good maister giue something.

Priest. If vpon thee lazy fellow, art thou not ashamed to beg? Read the blessed saying of S. Paul, which is, thou shalt get thy liuing with the sweat of thy browes, and he that will not labour is not worthy to eat.

Hone. I, but he remembers not where Christ saith, hee that giueth a cup of cold water in my name shall be blessed.

Beg. Alas sir, you see I am old.

priest. But thats no reason you should beg.

Beg. Alas sir, age coming on me, and my sight being gone, I hope sir, you will pardon mee though I beg, and therefore for Gods sake one penny, good master.

priest. Why I tel thee no, for the Spirit doth not moue me thereunto: and in good time, looke in the blessed Proverb of Salomon, which is, good deeds do not iustify a man, therefore I count it sinne to giue thee any thing.

Hone. See how he can turne and wind the Scripture to his owne vse, but he remembers not where Christ saith, He that giueth to the poore lendeth vnto the Lord, And he shal be repaid seuen fold: but the Priest forgets that, or at least wyle he will not remember it.

Beg. Now he vpon thee, is this the purenes of your religion? God will reward you no doubt for your hard dealing.

priest. Care not thou for that, wel neighbor, if thou wilt haue my house, friend, and brother in Christ, it wil cost you fourtie shillings, tis wel woozth it cruelly, provided this, I may not say for my rent, I might haue a great deale more, but I am loth to ex-act on my brother.

Hon. And yet he wil sell all a poore man hath for his shirt, for one quarters rent.

Neigh. Gods blessing on your heart sir, you made a goodly exhortation on Sunday.

priest. I brother, the Spirite did moue me thereunto: He vpon vsurie, where a man wil cut his brothers throat for a little Lucre,







to knowe a knaue.

Lucre, he byon it, he, we are bozne one to liue by another, and for a man to let his owne as he may liue, tis allowed by the word of God, but for vsurie and oppreſſion, he on it, tis vngodlie, but tell me will you haue it:

Neigh. I will giue you, as I haue profered you.

Priest. Truſie I cannott affoord it, I would I could, but I muſt goe to our exerciſe of prayer, & after I muſt goe ſee a Farm that I ſhould haue. *Exeunt.*

*Enter Dunſton and Perin with the King.*

Dunſt. **M**ost gracious Prince, bouchſafe to heare me ſpeake,  
In that the lawe of kinde prickes me on,

And though I ſpeake contrarie to your mind,

Yet doe I build on hope you will pardon me.

Were I as eloquent as Demosthenes,

Or lyke Iſocrates were giuen to Oratorie

Your Grace no doubt wil thinke the time well ſpent,

And I ſhould gaine me commendations:

But for my note is tuned contrary,

*(uerie.*

I muſt intreat your Grace to pardon me, if I do ſar in my deli-

King. Why Dunſton, thou haſt found vs gracious ſtill,

For will we pull our ſetled loue from thee,

Untill we find thy dealings contrarie:

But if thy parlie be for Eichenwald,

That baſe diſſembler with his ſoueraigne.

Twere better leaue to ſpeake in his excuſe,

Than by excuſing him gaine our ill will:

For I am minded like the Salamander ſtone,

That fir'd with anger, wil not in haſt be quenched:

Though wax be ſoft, & apt to receiue any impreſſion.

Yet will hard mettell take no forme, except you melt the ſame.

So meane mens minds may moue as they thinke good,

But Kings iuſt doomes are irrevocable.

Dunſt. Tis not ynough, where iuſt doth moue the offence.

King. Why, Counſellers may not with Kings diſpence.

Dun. A Counſeller may ſpeake if he ſee his prince offend.

King. And for his Counſell rue it in the end.



### A merie knack

But Dunston, leaue you vrges ouer far,  
We pardon what is past, but speake no more

Dunst. May pardon we, for I will speak my mind,  
Your Grace may call to mind proud Marius fall,  
That through his wilfull mind, lost life and empire,  
And Nimrod, that built huge Babylon,  
And thought to make a toure to check the cloudes,  
Was soone dismayd by vnkowne languages:  
For no one knew what any other spake,  
Which made him to confesse, though twere too late,  
Hee had made offence in tempting of the Lord.  
Remember Dauid, Salomon and the rest,  
Nor had proud Holofernes lost his head,  
Had he not bene a foule Adulterer.

Kin. Dunston, forbeare, and let this answer thee  
Thou art too presumptuous in repprouing me,  
For I haue sworn as trulie as I liue,  
That I will neuer pardon Ethenwald.

Dun. Did you but see the man, I am assurde,  
You would not choose but pardon Ethenwald.

per. Why Dunston, you haue seene as wel as I,  
That Ethenwald hath dissembled with the King,  
My gracious Lord, first cut that Traitor downe,  
And then will others feare the lyke amysse.

Dun. I tell thee perin, were the Carle in place,  
Thou wouldest eat these words betred in his disgrace.  
Veni Asmoroth, & in good time see where he comes.

Here enter Alfrida disguised with the Deuill.

Kin. But tel me Dunston, is this Alfrida?

Dun. It is my gracious Lord, & this is Ethenwald:  
That layes his breast wide open to your Grace,  
If so it please your Grace to pardon him.

King, Yes, Dunston, I am well content to pardon him,  
Ethenwald stand by, and rise by Alfrida,  
For Edgar now giues pardon to you both.

Dun. Asmoroth away, My gracious Lord, Dunston will not for  
This







to knowe a knaue,

This vnknowne fauour shoue Earle Ethenwald,  
For which account my Nephew and my self,  
Do yeeld both lyses and goods at your dispose.

King. Thanks Dunston for thy honorable loue,  
And thou deseru'st to be a Counsellour,  
For he deserues not other to commaund,  
That hath no power to maister his desire,  
For Locrin being the eldest sonne of Brute,  
Did dote so far vpon an Almaine maide,  
And was so rauisht with her pleasing sight,  
That full seuen yeares he kept her under earth,  
Euen in the lyfe time of faire Guendolin:  
Which made the Cornish men to rise in Armes,  
And neuer left till Locrin was slaine:  
And now though late, at last I call to minde,  
What wretched ends fell to Adulterers.

Dun. And if your Grace cal Abrams tale to mind,  
When that Egyptian Pharo craued his wife,  
You will no doubt forgive my Nephewes guilt,  
Who by the mery test he shewed your Grace,  
Did saue your Honour and her chastitie.

King. We take it so, and for amends  
Ethenwald, giue me thy hande and we are friends,  
And loue thy wyfe and liue together long,  
For Edgar hath forgot all former wrong.

Eth. Thanks gracious King, and here vpon my knee,  
I rest to be disposed as you please:

Kin. Enough Ethenwald, but who comes here.

Enter Honesty.

Hon. Why, I thinke I haue taken in hand an endles taske,  
To smell a Knaue, tis moze than a Dog can doe:  
I haue disguised my self of purpose to finde  
A couple of Knaues, which are yet behind,  
The next Knaue is a Priest, calde John the precise,  
That with counterfeit holinesse blinds the peoples eyes,

¶

This

## A meric knack

This is one of them that wil say it is a shame;  
 For men to swear and blaspheme Gods holie name:  
 Yet if a make a good Sermon but once in a yeare,  
 I will be fourtie tymes in a Tauerne making good chere,  
 Yet in the Church he will read with such sobrietie,  
 That you would thinke him verie precise, and of great honesty.

Kim What Honesty, hast thou dispatcht and found these pri-  
 uie knaues? (Exit.

Hon. I shal doe anon, I haue them in sent, but I wil be gone.

(Enter priest. (exercise,

pr. Good Lord, I praise God I am come from our moornings  
 Where I haue profited my selfe, and eased my brethren,  
 In shewing the way to saluation by my doctrine:  
 And now I am going to the Court to prefer my petition,  
 I would giue a hundred pound it were graunted:  
 'Tis a thing nothing, but here comes one of the Court,

Enter Honesty.

God saue you, brother in Christ, are you towards the King.

Honest. I mary am I, what then, why doest thou aske?

priest. Nothing sir, but I would desire you to stand my friend

To get me the Kings hand and seale to this letter:

I would not vse it (sir) to hinder any man for a thousand pound:

For indeed I am a Cleargie man by my profession:

'Tis nothing sir, but as you see, to haue the Kings seale,

To carie Tin, Lead, Wool and broad Clothes beyond seas,

For you know (sir) euery man wil mak the most he can of his owne

And for my part, I vse it but for a present necessitie.

If you will vndertake to doe it, Ile giue you a hundred pound.

Honesty. I thanke you sir, but I am affraide the King will  
 hardlye grant it: why, 'tis an vndoling to the common wealth,

But trulie I will moue the King to hang you Priest pfaich.

May it please you Grace to grant me my petition,

For I offer it your Grace in pure deuotion.

King. O monstrous Dunston, didst thou euer heare the like,  
 Now lie vpon thee base villaine, lay hands on him. (King,

Hon. On me? nay, on him: Priest, I gaue your petition to the  
 And







to knowe a Knaue.

And I will speake to him you may be but hanged,  
For if you should liue till the King granted your petition,  
The verie Rauens would picke out thine eles liuing:  
And therefore twere better you were hanged to saue the birds a  
King. Now Honesty, hadst thou done, is here all: (labour.

Honesty. O no, my Lord, for there are so many behind,  
That I am affraide my worke will neuer haue an end:  
But I see by the Priestes lookes, he lackes company,  
Stay a while, my Lord, Ile fetch another presently.

Kin. Fie, Gracelesse man, hast thou no feare of God,  
To withold thee from these lawlesse motions,  
Why, thou shouldst be as Challenger of God,  
And hate deceit and wicked auarice:  
But thou art one of those whome God both hate,  
And thy wilde deedes will witness gainst thy soule:  
And make the most abominable in his sight,  
That made thee (wretch) but to a better end,  
Then thus to wrong his sacred Deitie.  
Now lie vpon thee monster of a man,  
That for to gaine thy selfe a priuate gaine,  
Wouldst seeke the vndoing of a common wealth.  
And though thou bidst ten thousand torments here  
They cannot quit thee where thou shalt appeare.

Honest. A Prize, though it be long, I haue found him at last,  
But I could not bring him with me,  
And therefore I find a paper on his shoulder,  
Meaning thereby to marke him for the gallous:  
But hush, here he comes.

Enter Perin.

King. What Perin? I cannot think that Perin will be false to  
Hon. Why no, for he is false to himself, look in his pocket & see,  
This is but a false wit that he hath bled,  
Unknowne to your Priestie, and leuied great summes of money,  
And byied vpon your poore Commons extreamlie,  
Now say you my Lord, is this true or no?

King. Honesty, thou sayest true, why, impious wretch,

A merie knacke

Ingratefull wretch that thou art to iniure him that alwaies held  
Belreue me Dunston, I durst wel haue sworn, (thee deere,  
That Perin had not hatcht so base a thought,

Hon. I, but your Grace see **C**you are deceiued,  
But will your Grace grant me one boone :

King. What's that Honesty?

Hon. That I may haue the punishing of them,  
Whom I haue so laboured to synde.

King. With all my hart Honesty, vse them as thou wilt,

Hon. I thank your Grace: go fetch the other two:  
Now to you Cutbert Cutpurse the Conicatcher,  
Thy iudgment is to stand at the Market crosse,  
And haue thy curles tongue pind to thy breast,  
And there to stand for men to wonder at:

**T**il Owles and night-Rauens picke out thy curles eyes.

Conicatch. Good Honesty be moze mercifull.

Hon. You know my mind: O Walter that wold haue moze,  
And you shall haue iudgement I meane, which is,  
To be caried into a cozne field, and ther haue your legs and hands  
cut off, because you loued cozn so wel, and there rest til the crows  
pick out thine eyes. (thereunto,

But now to you that wil do nothing except the spirit mooue you  
You shall for abusing the blessed word of God,  
And mocking the diuine order of Ministry,  
Whereby you haue led the ignorant into errours,  
You (I say) as you were Hamlesse in your shamefull dealing,  
Shal to your shame, & the vtter shame of al bad minded men,  
That liue as thou hast done,

Stand in Finsburie fields, neere London,  
And there (as a dissembling Hypocrite) be shot to death.

priest. Good Honesty, be moze fauourable than so,

Hon. Trulie no, the spirit doth not mooue me therunto,  
But who is next, what Perin, a Courtier, and a Colouer to,  
I haue a iudgment yet in store for thee,  
And for because I will vse thee fauourable,  
Psaich thy iudgment is to be but hanged,

But







to knowe a Knaue,

But where'euē at Tyborne in a good two-peny halter,  
And though you could neuer abide the seas, (Meet,  
Yet now against your wil, you must bear your saile, namely your  
And in a cart be towde by Holburne hill,  
Would all men liuing lyke these in this land,  
Might be iudged so at Honesties hand.

Kin. Well Honestie come follow vs to Court,  
Where thou shalt be rewarded for thy paine. (Lucres sake

Hon. I thank your Grace: you that wil damne your selues for  
And make no conscience to deceiue the poore:  
You that be enemies of the common wealch:  
To send cozne ouer to enrich the enemy:  
And you that doe abuse the word of God,  
And send ouer wolles and Tin, broad cloath and lead,  
And you that counterfeit Kings priuie seales,  
And thereby rob the willing minded Communalitie,  
I warne you all that vse such subtile villanie,  
Beware lest you lyke these be found by Honestie,  
Take heed I say, for if I catch you once,  
Your bodies shall be meat for Crowses,  
And the Deuill shall haue your bones,  
And thus though long at last we make an end,  
Desiring you to pardon whats amisse,  
And way the worke, though it be grosse pend,  
Laugh at the fautes, and weigh it as it is,  
And Honestie wil pray vpon his knee,  
God cut then off that wrong the Prince of Communalitie.  
And may her dayes of blesse neuer haue end,  
Vpon whose lyfe so many lyues depend, Finis.

Imprinted at London, by

Richard Ihones, and are to be sould, at the signe  
of the Rose and Crowne, nere to S. Andrewes  
Church in Holborne, 1594



























































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A knack to know a knave



